

Message Text

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SUBJ: EMIGRATION

REF: TEL AVIV 2044

1. SUMMARY. RECENT ESTIMATE BY CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS (CBS) THAT 15,000-20,000 ISRAELIS EMIGRATED DURING 1974 HAS CREATED SERIOUS CONCERN HERE OVER ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC MORALE, AS WELL AS IMPLICATION FOR GOI GOAL TO INCREASE POPULATION AND ATTRACT IMMIGRANTS FROM THE WEST AND FROM SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING SPEECH BY JEWISH AGENCY CHAIRMAN PINHAS SAPIR JANUARY 6, IN WHICH HE CITED THAT " OVER 8,000" ISRAELIS LEFT ISREL IN 1974, CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS (CBS) HAS NOW RELEASED ITS OWN DATA IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRES ESTIMATING EMIGRATION AT ROUGHLY BETWEEN 15,000-20,000.

3. SAPIR WARNED THAT INCREASED EMIGRATION REPRESENTS SERIOUS CONCERN AS IT INCLUDED NOT ONLY RECENT IMMIGRANTS TO ISRAEL BUT ISRAELIS OF FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS.

4. CBS OFFICIAL HAS EXPLAINED TO US THAT 1974 ESTIMATES
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WERE BASED ON EXTRAPOLATION OF TRENDS IN PREVIOUS YEARS

COMPARED TO 1974 ON NUMBER OF ISRAELIS DEPARTING ISRAEL ON VARIOUS TYPES OF VISAS AND CONTINUING TO REMAIN ABROAD FOR PERIODS OF TIME WHICH TEND TO PLACE THEM IN EMIGRANT STATUS. HE STRESSED THAT TECHNIQUES FOR ESTIMATING EMIGRATION ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AS ONE IS NEVER SURE WHETHER DEPARTURE FROM ISRAEL IS INDEED PERMANENT EMIGRATION OR MERELY EXTENDED BUT TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ABROAD.

5. ESTIMATE OF 1974 EMIGRATION IS SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN AVERAGE ANNUAL EMIGRATION IN PRECEDING EIGHT YEARS. IN 1966, WHEN ISRAEL ENCOUNTERED SERIOUS 10 PER CENT RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, EMIGRATION WAS RECORDED AT 11,000. IN PERIOD 1967-1973, AVERAGE ANNUAL EMIGRATION WAS ESTIMATED AT 8,000, WITH PEAK ESTIMATED AT 11,000 IN 1973. IF 1974 ESTIMATES ARE ACCURATE ROUGHLY 6 PERSONS PER 1,000 POPULATION WILL HAVE EMIGRATED, COMPARED TO 4 PERSONS PER 1,000 POPULATION IN 1966.

6. WITH SOME 32,000 NEW IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN 1974, ESTIMATED EMIGRATION FOR SAME PERIOD LEAVES 13,000-17,000 NET MIGRATION FOR PAST YEAR.

7. DESPITE STATISTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN ESTIMATING EMIGRATION, MAGNITUDE OF CBS ESTIMATE HAS CREATED SERIOUS CONCERN. NOTED COMMENTATOR, AMNON RUBINSTEIN, WRITING IN HAARETZ JANUARY 12-13, RECALLED WAVE OF RUMORS OF EMIGRATION FOLLOWING OCTOBER 1973 WAR, AND ATTRIBUTED REASONS FOR HIGH EMIGRATION ESTIMATES TO SPECTRUM OF PROBLEMS RELATING TO ANXIETIES ABOUT SECURITY AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISCONTENT. CLAIMING THAT EMIGRATION IS NOW OPENLY DISCUSSED AND IS APPARENTLY MORE PREVALENT AMONG YOUNG, BETTER EDUCATED ISRAELIS, HE STRESSED THAT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE IN ISRAEL IS ONLY WAY TO REVERSE THE TREND.

8. COMMENT. WHILE RATE OF EMIGRATION IN ISRAEL IS PERHAPS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, IT HAS MORE SERIOUS IMPACT ON MORALE IN COUNTRY AT TIME OF CRITICAL SECURITY, THREAT, RUNS COUNTER TO MAJOR ISRAELI GOAL OF INCREASED POPULATION, AND IS SET-BACK TO ISRAELI EFFORTS TO ATTRACT IMMIGRATION FROM THE WEST AS WELL AS FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOVIET UNION.
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